

# CHAPTER 7

As, in the story of David, one chapter of wars and victories follows another, so, in the story of Solomon, one chapter concerning his buildings follows another. In this chapter we have,

- I. His fitting up several buildings for himself and his own use (v. 1-12).
- II. His furnishing the temple which he had built for God,
  1. With two pillars (v. 13-22).
  2. With a molten sea (v. 23-26).
  3. With ten basins of brass (v. 27-37), and ten layers upon them (v. 38, 39).
  4. With all the other utensils of the temple (v. 40-50).
  5. With the things that his father had dedicated (v. 51). The particular description of these things was not needless when it was written, nor is it now useless.

## <100>1 KINGS 7:1-12

### THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Never had any man so much of the spirit of building as Solomon had, nor to better purpose; he began with the temple, built for God first, and then all his other buildings were comfortable. The surest foundations of lasting prosperity are those which are laid in an early piety, <406>Matthew 6:33.

1. He built a house for himself (v. 1), *where he dwelt*, v. 8. His father had built a good house; but it was no reflection upon his father for him to build a better, in proportion to the estate wherewith God had blessed him. Much of the comfort of this life is connected with an agreeable house. He was thirteen years building this house, whereas he built the temple in little more than seven years; not that he was more exact, but less eager and intent, in building his own house than in building God's. He was in no haste for his own palace, but impatient till the temple was finished and fit for use. Thus we ought to prefer God's honour before our own ease and satisfaction.

**2.** He built *the house of the forest at Lebanon* (v. 2), supposed to be a country seat near Jerusalem, so called from the pleasantness of its situation and the trees that encompassed it. I rather incline to think that it was a house built in the forest of Lebanon itself, whither (though far distant from Jerusalem) Solomon (having so many chariots and horses, and those dispersed into chariot-cities, which probably were his stages) might frequently retire with ease. It does not appear that his throne (mentioned v. 7) was at the house of the forest of Lebanon, and it was not at all improper to put his shields there as in a magazine. Express notice is taken of his buildings, not only in Jerusalem, but in Lebanon (~~1099~~ 1 Kings 9:19), and we read of the tower of Lebanon, which looks towards Damascus (~~2104~~ Song of Solomon 7:4), which probably was part of this house. A particular account is given of this house, that being built in Lebanon, a place famed for cedars, the pillars, and beams, and roof, were all cedar (v. 2, 3), and, being designed for pleasant prospects, there were three tiers of windows on each side, *light against light* (v. 4, 5), or, as it may be read, *prospect against prospect*. Those whose lot is cast in the country may be well reconciled to a country life by this, that some of the greatest princes have thought those the most pleasant of their days which they have spent in their country retirements.

**3.** He built piazzas before one of his houses, either that at Jerusalem or that in Lebanon, which were very famous — a porch of pillars (v. 6), perhaps for an exchange or a guard-house, or for those to walk in that attended him about business till they could have audience, or for state and magnificence. He himself speaks of Wisdom's building her house, and *hewing out her seven pillars* (~~2100~~ Proverbs 9:1), for the shelter of those that, three verses before (~~1033~~ 1 Kings 8:34), are said to *watch daily at her gates and to wait at the posts of her doors*.

**4.** At his house where he dwelt in Jerusalem he built a great hall, or porch of judgment, where was set the throne, or king's bench, for the trial of causes, in which he himself was appealed to (*placita coram ipso rege tenenda* — *causes were to be adjusted in the king's presence*), and this was richly wainscoted with cedar, from the floor to the roof, v. 7. He had there also *another court within the porch*, nearer his house, of similar work, for his attendants to walk in, v. 8.

**5.** He built a house for his wife, where she kept her court, v. 8. It is said to be *like the porch*, because built of cedar like it, though not in the same

form; this, no doubt, was nearer adjoining to his own palace, yet perhaps if it had been as near as it ought to have been Solomon would not have multiplied wives as he did.

The wonderful magnificence of all these buildings is taken notice of, v. 9, etc. All the materials were the best of their kind. The foundation-stones were costly for their size, four or five yards square, or at least so many yards long (v. 10), and the stones of the building were costly for the workmanship, hewn and sawn, and in all respects finely wrought, v. 9, 11. The court of his own house was like that of the temple (v. 12, compare <sup><1073></sup>1 Kings 6:36); so well did he like the model of God's courts that he made his own by it.

## <sup><1073></sup>1 KINGS 7:13-47

### THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

We have here an account of the brass-work about the temple. There was no iron about the temple, though we find David preparing for the temple *iron for things of iron*, <sup><1391></sup>1 Chronicles 29:2. What those things were we are not told, but some of the things of brass are here described and the rest mentioned.

**I.** The brasier whom Solomon employed to preside in this part of the work was Hiram, or Hiram (<sup><1401></sup>2 Chronicles 4:11), who was by his mother's side an Israelite, of the tribe of Naphtali, by his father's side a man of Tyre, v. 14. If he had the ingenuity of a Tyrian, and the affection of an Israelite to the house of God (the head of a Tyrian and the heart of an Israelite), it was happy that the blood of the two nations mixed in him, for thereby he was qualified for the work to which he was designed. As the tabernacle was built with the wealth of Egypt, so the temple with the wit of Tyre. God will serve himself by the common gifts of the children of men.

**II.** The brass he made use of was the best he could get. All the brazen vessels were of *bright brass* (v. 45), *good brass*, so the Chaldee, that which was strongest and looked finest. God, who is the best, must be served and honoured with the best.

**III.** The place where all the brazen vessels were cast was the plain of Jordan, because the ground there was stiff and clayey, fit to make moulds of for the casting of the brass (v. 46), and Solomon would not have this dirty smoky work done in or near Jerusalem.

**IV.** The quantity was not accounted for. The vessels were *unnumbered* (so it may be read, v. 47, as well as *unweighed*), *because they were exceedingly numerous*, and it would have been an endless thing to keep the account of them; *neither was the weight of the brass*, when it was delivered to the workmen, searched or enquired into; so honest were the workmen, and such great plenty of brass they had, that there was no danger of wanting. We must ascribe it to Solomon's care that he provided so much, not to his carelessness that he kept no account of it.

**V.** Some particulars of the brass-work are described.

**1.** Two brazen pillars, which were set up *in the porch of the temple* (v. 21), whether under the cover of the porch or in the open air is not certain; it was between the temple and the court of the priests. These pillars were neither to hang gates upon nor to rest any building upon, but purely for ornament and significancy.

**(1.)** What an ornament they were we may gather from the account here given of the curious work that was about them, chequer-work, chain-work, net-work, lily-work, and pomegranates in rows, and all of bright brass, and framed no doubt according to the best rules of proportion, to please the eye.

**(2.)** Their significancy is intimated in the names given them (v. 21): *Jachin* — *he will establish*; and *Boaz* — *in him is strength*. Some think they were intended for memorials of the pillar of cloud and fire which led Israel through the wilderness: I rather think them designed for memorandums to the priests and others that came to worship at God's door,

**[1.]** To depend upon God only, and not upon any sufficiency of their own, for strength and establishment in all their religious exercises. When we come to wait upon God, and find our hearts wandering and unfixed, then by faith let us fetch in help from heaven: *Jachin* — *God will fix this roving mind. It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace*. We find ourselves weak and unable for holy duties, but this is our encouragement: *Boaz* — *in him is our strength*, who works in us both to will and to do. *I*

*will go in the strength of the Lord God.* Spiritual strength and stability are to be had at the door of God's temple, where we must wait for the gifts of grace in the use of the means of grace.

[2.] It was a memorandum to them of the strength and establishment of the temple of God among them. Let them keep close to God and duty, and they should never lose their dignities and privileges, but the grant should be confirmed and perpetuated to them. The gospel church is what God will establish, what he will strengthen, and what the gates of hell can never prevail against. But, with respect to this temple, when it was destroyed particular notice was taken of the destroying of these pillars (<sup><12513></sup>2 Kings 25:13, 17), which had been the tokens of its establishment, and would have been so if they had not forsaken God.

2. A brazen sea, a very large vessel, above five yards in diameter, and which contained above 500 barrels of water for the priests' use, in washing themselves and the sacrifices, and keeping the courts of the temple clean, v. 23, etc. It stood raised upon the figures of twelve oxen in brass, so high that either they must have stairs to climb up to it or cocks at the bottom to draw water from it. The Gibeonites, or Nethinim, who were to draw water for the house of God, had the care of filling it. Some think Solomon made the images of oxen to support this great cistern in contempt of the golden calf which Israel had worshipped, that (as bishop Patrick expresses it) the people might see there was nothing worthy of adoration in those figures; they were fitter to make posts of than to make gods of. Yet this prevailed not to prevent Jerusalem's setting up the calves for deities. In the court of the tabernacle there was only a laver of brass provided to wash in, but in the court of the temple a sea of brass, intimating that by the gospel of Christ much fuller preparation is made for our cleansing than was by the law of Moses. That had a laver, this has a sea, *a fountain opened*, <sup><811></sup>Zechariah 13:1.

3. Ten bases, or stands, or settles, of brass, on which were put ten lavers, to be filled with water for the service of the temple, because there would not be room at the molten sea for all that had occasion to wash there. The bases on which the lavers were fixed are very largely described here, v. 27, etc. They were curiously adorned and set upon wheels, that the lavers might be removed as there was occasion; but ordinarily they stood in two rows, five on one side of the court and five on the other, v. 39. Each laver contained forty baths, that is, about ten barrels, v. 38. Those must be very

*clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.* Spiritual priests and spiritual sacrifices must be washed in the laver of Christ's blood and of regeneration. We must wash often, for we daily contract pollution, must cleanse our hands and purify our hearts. Plentiful provision is made for our cleansing; so that if we have our lot for ever among the unclean it will be our own fault.

**4.** Besides these, there was a vast number of brass pots made to boil the flesh of the peace-offerings in, which the priests and offerers were to feast upon before the Lord (see ~~<0014>~~1 Samuel 2:14); also shovels, wherewith they took out the ashes of the altar. Some think the word signifies *flesh-hooks*, with which they took meat out of the pot. The basins also were made of brass, to receive the blood of the sacrifices. These are put for all the utensils of the brazen altar, ~~<0038>~~Exodus 38:3. While they were about it they made abundance of them, that they might have a good stock by them when those that were first in use wore out and went to decay. Thus Solomon, having wherewithal to do so, provided for posterity.

## ~~<0078>~~ 1 KINGS 7:48-51

### THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Here is,

**1.** The making of the gold work of the temple, which it seems was done last, for with it the work of the house of God ended. All within doors was gold, and all made new (except the ark, with its mercy-seat and cherubim), the old being either melted down or laid by — the golden altar, table, and candlestick, with all their appurtenances. The altar of incense was still *one*, for Christ and his intercession are so: but he made ten golden tables, ~~<0048>~~2 Chronicles 4:8 (though here mention is made of that one only *on which the show-bread was*, v. 48, which we may suppose was larger than the rest and to which the rest were as side-boards), and *ten golden candlesticks* (v. 49), intimating the much greater plenty both of spiritual food and heavenly light which the gospel blesses us with than the law of Moses did our could afford. Even the hinges of the door were of gold (v. 50), that every thing might be alike magnificent, and bespeak Solomon's generosity. Some suggest that every thing was made thus splendid in God's temple to keep

the people from idolatry, for none of the idol-temples were so rich and fine as this: but how little the expedient availed the event showed.

**2.** The bringing in of the dedicated things, which David had devoted to the honour of God, v. 51. What was not expended in the building and furniture was laid up in the treasury, for repairs, exigencies, and the constant charge of the temple-service. What the parents have dedicated to God the children ought by no means to alienate or recall, but should cheerfully devote what was intended for pious and charitable uses, that they may, with their estates, inherit the blessing.